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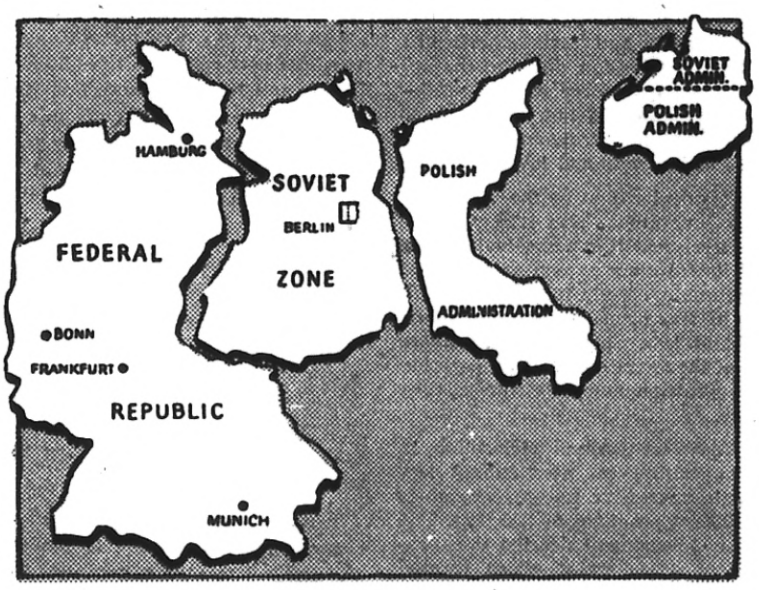
Peace Treaty Coming

"Speed Up Discussions" Call

JUST A LITTLE MAP?



The small outline map reproduced above appears regularly every week in "The German View", a propaganda bulletin published by the West German Embassy in London.

On first sight this map may look harmless: but actually it is a programme of aggression. Let us look at in detail:

1. The western third of the map is a correct outline of the German Federal Republic, West Germany. This is an existing, functioning state, and whether one may like its policy or not, it should be shown on maps as such.

2. In the middle of the map is a territory described as "Soviet Zone". The description is to say the least of it, very outdated; since 1949 the name of this territory has been "German Democratic Republic". It is an existing, functioning state, and whether one may like its policy or not, it should be shown on maps as such. Incidentally, most large modern standard atlases in all countries except West Germany describe this territory correctly.

3. The eastern third of the map shows various areas as "Polish administration" and "Soviet administration", but the shading implies that these large areas are somehow part of Germany. This is not only utterly incorrect, but is direct and open propaganda for a revision of the frontiers established by international agreement after World War Two. These areas are in fact integral parts of the Soviet Union and Poland, respectively. All standard maps and atlases in the western world (with the exception of West Germany) show them as such.

A German peace treaty which will settle the West Berlin question is unavoidable, Walter Ulbricht, Chairman of the State Council of the GDR declared in a speech published on September 13th.

Commenting on western reports that the GDR was using "salami tactics" with regard to West Berlin, Ulbricht stated:

"We are not using salami tactics. What we want is a peace treaty. The situation of the western powers in West Berlin has been weakened recently by the aggressive and provocative policy of the (West German) 'Ultras'.

"We did not have any plan to anticipate, step by step, conditions of the future peace treaty; but the aggressive acts of our opponents forced us to take security measures. The main reason for the steady weakening of the position of the western powers in West Berlin is the fact that they attempt to delay for a long period negotiations on a German peace settlement.

"This delaying of the discussions on a German peace settlement has obviously not helped the western powers. I should like to say quite frankly that further delay in such discussions will recoil on the heads of those who impose the delay.

"If the western powers are wise, then they will speed up the discussions on a German peace settlement, on the liquidation of the remnants of the Second World War, and on the conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarised Free City.

"If they carry out such discussions normally and without delay, then they need have no fear of 'further slices of salami'.

"But of course, if anyone commits acts of provocation, then we shall take further security measures. We shall not retreat a step in the face of these provocateurs and West German militarists. We have not fought for

decades in the German working class movement against German militarism in order to retreat in the face of the West Berlin and West German revanchists, provocateurs and militarists.

"In West Germany and in the West generally there is a growing feeling that it would be better to treat a German peace settlement more seriously; to place relations with the German Democratic Republic on a proper treaty basis in accordance with international law; and to reach a stage at which both German states shall be recognised on a basis of equality in the United Nations.

"The first steps for the maintenance of peace must be the liquidation of the remnants of the Second World War, a German peace settlement, the liquidation of the Occupation Statute in West Berlin, and the conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarised Free City.

"Such a peace settlement would not involve any dangers for the population of West Berlin. We have repeatedly declared that we are ready to give all guarantees, relevant state declarations to the United Nations; and that we are ready to make the relevant agreements with the West Berlin Senate."

Walter Ulbricht was addressing trade unionists from both German states at the annual German Workers' Conference held in Leipzig at the time of the Leipzig Autumn Trade Fair.

Answering questions from West German unionists about the GDR state frontier in Berlin, Ulbricht stated:

"Some of you have asked: 'How long will the wall continue to exist?' Some colleagues have already answered this question: 'The wall will continue to exist until the West German people have got their militarists under control'.

"It does not really depend on us, it depends on you. Nobody should think that we love the wall; this is certainly not the case. The wall was only built after military provocations had been prepared on the West Berlin side, and when it became necessary to erect this anti-fascist protective wall.

"It is true that our opponents have managed to push the question of the state frontier of the GDR so much in the foreground that it sometimes overshadows other questions. After the conclusion of a peace treaty relations between the two German states could be placed on a normal treaty relationship. Relations would be normalised, traffic would be normalised, everything would be in order."

NON-RECOGNITION OF BORDER CREATES DANGER

The West German Government is pursuing an extremely dangerous course in regarding the German Democratic Republic and its frontiers as non-existent, legal experts of the GDR declared in a statement issued on September 6th. The statement, issued after a joint session of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the People's Chamber of the GDR and experts from the Foreign Ministry, stated:

"In the first 8 months of this year, apart from many other frontier provocations, there were over 60 cases in which fire was opened on the guards of the GDR.

"On August 20th 1962 the West German Government, obviously trying to legalise and further sharpen its policy of aggression, declared that infringements by force of the frontier of the GDR could not be compared with 'frontier infringements in the sense of international law'.

"This declaration by the West German Government that it regards an effectively existing peace-loving state and its frontiers as non-existent and illegitimate, clearly fulfils the definition of war propaganda under international law. Such declarations are one of the forms of direct preparation for aggression, and are crimes against peace.

"This West German declaration, in its opposition to international law and its aggressive nature, resembles the fascist practices of the past. The Hitler Government decried the frontiers of other states which formed obstacles to its aggressive aims as 'contrary to law' or as 'unnatural'; and in the same way the Bonn Government calls for constant acts of violence against the frontiers, and organises criminal acts in this connection. In particular, the West German Government strives to utilise the occupation regime, still illegally maintained by the Western Powers in West Berlin, as a starting point and support for the attacks on the state frontier of the GDR.

"In order to camouflage the West German policy of aggression, West German theoreticians are developing an extremely dangerous thesis. Further developing the claim made by West German War Minister Strauss that the Second World War is not yet ended, they propagate the idea that the relationship between the two German states should not be governed by the principles of peaceful co-existence, as the GDR demands, but by the principles of the international laws of war, or even without any regard to international law. This means that the effective existence of the GDR and its frontiers is no obstacle to the West German annexation demands. This claim underlines the close connection between the attacks on the state frontier of the GDR and the attacks on the German-Polish frontier of peace on the Oder and Neisse.

"In view of the fact that the military forces of the aggressive North Atlantic Pact and of the Warsaw Pact states face each other directly on the frontiers between the GDR and West Berlin and the GDR and West Germany, the danger of the crimes cited must be regarded as extremely great. World public opinion cannot be reminded too often and too firmly of these facts.

"The Western Powers, who at present claim occupation functions in West Berlin, are bound to prevent breaches of the peace in the area which they de facto dominate. Despite this, they do nothing to act effectively against the acts of aggression endangering peace; on the contrary they support them.

"Under international law the state organs of the GDR are empowered and obliged to take suitable steps to thwart and to punish the aggressive attacks on the frontiers and on the existence of the GDR organised by the ruling forces of the Federal Republic and West Berlin. We take this opportunity of warning very seriously the citizens of West Germany and West Berlin not to allow themselves to be misused for aggressive acts by the West German and West Berlin politicians.

"World peace and the basic security needs of the peoples demand that all states interested in the maintenance of peace should oppose the aggressive policy of the ruling circles of West Germany and West Berlin, and should support the conclusion of the German peace treaty and the normalisation of the situation in West Berlin on this basis."

Bundeswehr Sergeant Goes East

A West German Bundeswehr sergeant, Johannes Rieger, who left his unit in a Panzer training school to come to the GDR, stated that his officers disciplined him severely for his unwillingness to "arrest, examine and execute, if necessary" members of his own family living in the GDR in case of a West German invasion.

Sergeant Rieger told newspapermen that he had been brought up in Weimar in the GDR, where he learned the trade of baker. He attended the Roman Catholic Congress in 1956 in Cologne, and was persuaded to remain in West Germany by a religious organisation there, which promised him the opportunity to go to college.

When these promises were not kept, Rieger told how he had gone to work in the Phoenix-Rheinrohr steelworks and then in 1959 had joined the Bundeswehr, which would soon have conscripted him in any case.

After attending a school to train non-commissioned officers, Rieger was appointed to a training job at the Panzer Troop School.

Describing life in the army school, Rieger said:

"The officers of the panzer units and especially the panzer reconnaissance units have formed a sort of militaristic elite in their officer corps. A huge proportion of the higher officers comes from the titled aristocracy, just like the elegant cavalry regiments in the Kaiser's army. Many of them were once big landowners in Pomerania, East Prussia and Silesia (now parts of Poland and the Soviet Union, ed.), and all of them were officers in the nazi Wehrmacht and have 'experience on the eastern front'.

"For example, my training group commander was Lt. Col. von Zitzewitz, then there were Lt. Col. Baron zu Dohna, Majors von der Trenck, von Ostau, von Versen, etc. When Dohna was transferred, his successor was a former SS officer, Lt. Col. Maecker.

"The young officers were also mostly blue-bloods. Of the 16 ensigns in my lecture room, 14 were aristocrats — among them Baron von Schleinitz, Count von Dürckheim and Prince von Hessen. The atmosphere and the tone at our school were naturally set by this group — just like in an aristocrats' club, haughty and nasty. The only thing they drank in the casino was champagne, for example; beer was looked down upon as 'plebeian'.

"But most of all, you can imagine what these people thought about the goals of their career, about the GDR and the question of Germany's eastern frontiers. 'This state and this frontier must disappear, and that is why we are strengthening the Bundeswehr' — that was their opinion. I discovered that the Bundeswehr has nothing to do with defence, but is being built up for a war of aggression.

"Because I was well-recommended by my unit," Sergeant Rieger continued. "the Security Officer, Captain Reinhardt, asked me to work for counter-intelligence. I was told to watch ensigns in my lecture room, try to discover their opinions, watch their mail and female friends, find out whom they owed money to, and especially whether they had any kind of connections with the 'East'.

"When counter-intelligence started to ask a great deal about Ensign Melms, a personal friend, I got completely disgusted ... The school's officers were looking for 'evidence' to show why he could not become an officer, because he was a craftsman by trade.

"I refused to do this and was called up in front of the school leadership. During the cross-questioning, they said, 'If war should come and you were sent with an advance group to Weimar, would you be ready to arrest your family there, cross-examine them and execute them if necessary?' I naturally said no, and that was the end of my career. I was dropped as instructor, disciplined and demoted. But then I left Bremen to come to the GDR. I hope here to make good the greatest mistake of my life and to help guarantee that men like Col. Zitzewitz never succeed in their plans."

NAZIS IN THE NEWS

Josef Kuhr, chief commissar of police in Frankfurt, West Germany, was arrested on September 13th and charged with participation in the murder of at least 15,000 Jewish men, women and children in Pinsk, occupied Soviet Union, in 1942. Kuhr was an officer of the nazi Police Battalion 306. He was also charged with the execution of many thousands of Soviet POWs in the Terespol area. Announcing the arrest, Frankfurt public prosecutor stated that the investigations into the case had been top secret, so that other nazi sympathisers in the police force could not tip off the wanted man.

Heinrich Plantius, another chief commissar of police in Frankfurt, was arrested at the same time on the same charges. He was a lieutenant of the nazi police battalion in the occupied Soviet Union.

Rudolf Eckert, chief commissar of police in Hamburg, was arrested on the same charges. He had been captain in the same nazi police battalion. Until his arrest, Eckert had been in charge of the political branch of the Hamburg police, and recently arrested a number of persons accused of working for the banned West German Communist Party.

Dr Ernst Loellke, state prosecutor in Hamburg, West Germany, has recently been identified as a prosecutor who obtained a number of death sentences in the nazi courts. In a case in Rostock Court in 1944, Loellke asked for and obtained a death sentence against Anna Pruditsch, a Polish slave labourer, who had stolen a few articles of clothing because she had nothing to wear. Dr Loellke stated: "She stole these articles with the typical shamelessness of a Pole", and demanded the death sentence, which was imposed. Loellke now prosecutes political cases against alleged Communists in the Hamburg courts.

Professor Rudolf Schiedermair, President of the Administrative Court in Wuerzburg, was suspended from office in September after filing charges of slander against a local doctor who published photostats showing that he was an SS officer in occupied Norway, and sentenced by a Norwegian court for war crimes after the liberation. Schiedermair does not dispute the authenticity of the documents, but claims that their publication today constitutes slander. One of the documents shows that before his exploits in Norway Schiedermair worked in the "racialist policy" section of the nazi Ministry of the Interior, together with Dr Hans Globke, today Chancellor Adenauer's personal assistant.

Harvest Problems

"Neues Deutschland", central organ of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR, commented on the current agricultural situation in a leading article on September 12th, which stated:

The favourable harvest days this summer could be counted on one's fingers. Even the hours when the weather was dry were very rare. In many areas of West Germany, the bad weather led to disaster for the farmers, and there are reports from Sweden, Belgium and other countries that a large part of the grain is still uncut. In the German Democratic Republic the cooperative farmers have been able to bring in the grain crops, thanks to the help of the workers, the party and government officials, members of the armed forces, housewives, pensioners and citizens from all walks of life. This was a great success in our socialist job of building up the country. Thanks are due to all who helped in the harvest.

Difficult as it was to get in the grain crop, the next jobs on the farms are no easier. The second hay harvest, the autumn planting, the maize and, most important, the potato harvest all take place within a very short time. We cannot pause in our efforts.

Everyone knows how important potatoes are, both for our own food supplies and as pig fodder. Last year we had a bad potato harvest; and even the potatoes which did grow were not alway lifted. This meant difficulties in supplying the population with potatoes in the first part of the year, and it also meant a lack of fodder for the pigs.

This year we planted more potatoes. Although we have less than half as much arable land as West Germany, the area under potatoes is nearly as large as theirs. Everything now depends on the whole potato crop being harvested. A big crop will be our best guarantee that more pigs are raised and our meat supply is improved.

The potato harvest still requires a great deal of manual labour. We can only master this task — as we learned from the grain harvest — if all cooperative farmers and the other villagers lend all their efforts and use every hour well . . .

Some of our readers have asked whether it is really necessary to help out the farmers again and again. Under capitalism the farmers managed by themselves, they say. But that is not true. The German imperialists utilised the poverty of the Polish agricultural labourers; in the harvest season they employed Polish migrant labourers for a very few pfennigs. Compulsory work service for young people (during the nazi period, ed.) also provided cheap labour for the landowners. Later they used POWs. All older people can recall that the school holidays in September were always called "potato holidays". Ever since potatoes have been planted in Germany, additional help has been required at harvest-time.

In West Germany the landowners even today exploit cheap labour from the poorest countries of Europe, from Italy, Spain and Belgium. Such exploitation is out of the question for us. We harvest the potatoes with the help of all the people.

In the counties of Schwerin, Neubrandenburg, Rostock, Frankfurt on Oder and Magdeburg we have some very large cooperative farms, with only eight, ten or twelve working members for every 100 hectares of land (247 acres). They have a particularly difficult time. In the weeks ahead tens of thousands of college students, People's Army soldiers and older school pupils will help them. The strength of our socialist community made it possible to bring in the grain. It will also enable us to harvest all potatoes before they are endangered by the coming frosts.

Czechs Protest on West Berlin

The Czechoslovak Government filed an official protest with the British Government on September 13th against the revanchist "Homeland Day" rally in the British Sector of West Berlin at the beginning of September.

"This provocative rally was aimed against the territorial integrity of the Czechoslovak Republic" the note stated. "The frontier revision claims reached their climax in the speech of Hans Krueger, Christian Democratic West German M. P., who stated that the road to new conquests 'led through Berlin'. This proves that West Berlin plays a part in the aggressive plans of the West German revanchists.

"Since the British Government has repeatedly stressed its responsibility for West Berlin, it must also bear the responsibility for the fact that such revanchist meetings take place; it is thus giving its support to these arrogant attacks on Czechoslovakia and other Socialist states."

Rommel Rides Again

West German Minister von Merkatz told 10,000 veterans of General Rommel's nazi Afrika Korps that "the Africa fighters helped lay the foundation for regaining the confidence of our neighbours". Merkatz, who also brought Chancellor Adenauer's greetings to Rommel's men at their meeting in Pirmasens, West Germany, on September 7th and 8th, told them that their gentlemenly fighting, marked by fairness, humaneness and respect for the individual, was widely respected in the world.

Also greeting the reunion, the eighth held by the group since 1952, was President Lübke, who sent a telegram praising the fact that "the old cameraderie which grew in difficult days has lasted till the present with all its former vigour."

Rudolf Kaffke, a former Wehrmacht officer and now a Social Democratic member of the Bundestag, told the veterans that "the West German Army urgently needs heroes like Rommel."

Leaders of all main West German political parties and the widow of General Rommel were also present at the meeting.

"Sent to Coventry"

Seven city mayors from towns in the German Democratic Republic were refused permission to attend the World Congress of United Towns meeting in Coventry in mid-September. The mayors had been officially invited by Sir Arthur Waugh, Lord Mayor of Coventry, who is President of the international organisation.

The seven municipal leaders were banned entry to Britain by the Allied Travel Office in West Berlin, which has bowed to West German pressure and prevented artists, scientists, athletes and most other GDR visitors from travelling to countries which are in NATO.

In an answer to a protest by the organisers of the Coventry meeting, a British Home Office spokesman stated: "The East German regime is not recognised by Britain. East Germans wanting to travel here have to get temporary travel documents, issued by the Allied Travel Office in West Berlin. The delegates have been unable to obtain temporary travel documents. The Home Office is not, therefore, in a position to issue visas."

The spokesman ignored the fact that the Allied Travel Office is in fact a joint British-American-French undertaking which can, and does, issue travel permits if any of the three nations wishes this to be done.

A First View of GDR

By Pat Sloan, London

In the early 1930s I visited Berlin en route from London to Moscow. Since then I have not visited Germany at all until now, when I have had the privilege of a two weeks visit to the GDR. Starting with East Berlin, I have travelled by car over a considerable part of the country, visiting the new town of Eisenhuettenstadt, Dresden, Leipzig, Jena and Weimar. I have visited three farms of different types and also the largest Youth Hostel in the GDR which we came upon by chance.

In a relatively short space I would like to comment in particular on East Berlin, Eisenhuettenstadt and Dresden.

First, to arrive in East Berlin by air from London does not provide that contrast which might be expected from reading the British press. East Berlin is a normal city. Within a few hundred yards of the famous frontier wall I have seen a playground full of lively children. The people in the streets are going about their business as in any town anywhere, and no casual observer would guess that they live within a few minutes walk of the most dramatised frontier in the world. So, if I were asked to sum up my impression of East Berlin I would answer with the one word: "Normal". The city is calm, the police and officials are good humoured. There are fewer people about than in London, and the city does not suffer from that traffic congestion which is the bane of all Western cities, including West Berlin.

The people — and this is true of all parts of the GDR that I have visited — are well dressed and well fed. True, in conversations it becomes clear that the problems arising from living in a divided country and in a divided capital cause anxiety, for it is not pleasant to have a state frontier running through your capital city. The shops and distribution, too, could be improved. But, nevertheless, the people are well clothed, obviously well fed by British standards, and I nowhere in my travels saw poverty.

However, war has left its scars, in Berlin and Dresden in particular. East Berlin today is reminiscent of the City of London up to five years ago, before the present rash of skyscrapers began to emerge. New buildings there are plenty in East Berlin, but large weed-grown bombed areas are also much in evidence. And, unlike the British, the East Berliners have in many cases left their ruins standing where in Britain they would have been demolished. Incidentally this is true of West Berlin, too, when you look behind the chromium-plated facade.

Dresden suffered a terrible raid in the very last days of the war, equalling those on Coventry and Rotterdam, and the inhabitants always recall that this raid was on a cultural centre and not on a strategic city. Great treasures of architecture were destroyed, and so far have only been partially restored.

In the sharpest contrast to the destruction still visible in Berlin and Dresden stands the completely new town of Eisenhuettenstadt, with its great iron works, cement works, and other new industrial enterprises. In the centre of the town the shops are a pleasure to see, and one side of the town is overlooked by pleasant wooded hills. Here is an example of the socialist city of the future. Today with a population of over 30,000, this figure is to be doubled in the next few years.

In Eisenhuettenstadt there is no old, no war damage, for this new town is entirely the creation of the past ten years. Deliberately, this new town and its industry have been built near the Polish frontier, raw materials come from the Soviet Union and Poland; it is a symbol of peaceful co-operation between the new Germany and its neighbours.

The town is well laid out. Industry is placed at one end, away from the houses, and buses carry the workers to and fro. Dwelling houses are grouped so that shops and schools are always nearby. The blocks of flats include hostels for young single workers, a category who get little or no attention from the public housing authorities in Britain. And an excellent feature is the grouping of nurseries and kindergartens together with schools so that the whole educational "complex" stands as a single unit. The health service is administered from a large hospital catering for the whole town in an organised way.

On a wooded hillside outside the town an open-air theatre has been built by the voluntary labour of the inhabitants. And in the town itself a full-sized theatre-cinema is already in use.

If, in East Berlin or Dresden, the destruction of the past war is still in evidence in the form of ruins, in Eisenhuettenstadt, in contrast, we have a new town of a new type, a symbol of the GDR's future: a socialist town and a symbol of peaceful international co-operation.

A word on agriculture. To a British visitor the GDR contains vast areas of forest, and this land, naturally, cannot be used for farming. But besides the forests, there are large expanses cultivated, and these bear a similarity to the British countryside but for two differences: First, there are no hedgerows or walls segregating one field from another, and secondly, the state-owned and collectively-owned fields cover an area very much greater than an average field in Britain. As to man and machine power, to the casual observer the number visible in the fields is very similar to what is visible in the British countryside.

By allowing the peasants a choice between the degrees of co-operation that they may choose, the Government has provided for various forms of farm: While very few individual farmers now remain, there are state farms (often large private farms which have been taken over) and there are collective farms of differing degrees of common ownership. In the "Category I" farms of this type the peasants continue to have their own cattle and I visited one such collective in which I saw individual farms with a dozen cows as well as pigs, horses, and poultry. At the other extreme, the "Category 3" collective farm exists, in which all the means of production and all livestock except poultry are the property of the collective. By means of "Category I" it is hoped to educate even well-to-do individual peasants into the methods of co-operation.

Before concluding this short article, or rather short impressions, I must add a note on one very important point. This is that in the GDR the history and the horrors of nazism are not forgotten, but are forever held up before the people. At Buchenwald, for example, there is a memorial to the victims of the concentration camp and an excellent museum of the history of nazism, the fight against it, and its destruction. All possible honour is paid to those who heroically resisted. And memorials have been erected to the peoples of all the countries who were victims in the camp.

The Museum of German History in Berlin, similarly, has a special exhibition devoted to the pre-war and

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New Actors in the Making

By Helga Preuss

The Dramatic School in Schoeneweide, East Berlin, is a smallish two-storey building surrounded by a large garden directly on Berlin's Spree River. It has a pleasantly rural atmosphere despite its city location.

Inside, I found rooms and corridors as in most schools. But soon a girl came down the corridor loudly murmuring, "sssim, sssam, sssum" and disappeared behind a door. Similar sounds betrayed the fact that speech instruction was being given there.

The students at the school have a busy three year course: much of their time is devoted to Scene Studies and Etudes, but they must also study Speaking Technique, Movement, Fencing, Dancing, Music, Make-up, Pantomime and Chansons. Theoretical courses include Theatre History and Dramaturgy, Philosophy, Aesthetics and Russian.

In the large room devoted to fencing I asked the instructor, Herr Walther, why students have to study fencing, of all sports, for three years. He told me that while fencing the young actors learn deftness in their motions. They are also in a position to do fencing scenes properly in historical plays. He assured me that "theatre" fencing was quite harmless; no blood had ever been shed in his classes. But the fencing work was both difficult and very useful for many of the students, he said, for there was still not enough stress on sports activities at many intermediary schools.

After attending a class on aesthetics, I got into conversation with one of the students, whom I had noticed because he had made some very intelligent observations during the lesson and because he seemed older than the average students, who were about 20. Manfred Mueller, who is 26, told me that most students seemed much more interested in practice than in theory, and that unfortunately the two are not yet properly combined in their courses. Many of the students, however, show their true understanding of what is behind the dry theory by helping to enrich the society in which they live. The main way they do this is by using part of their leisure time to help build amateur dramatic groups.

Manfred Mueller told me that many of the students head dramatic clubs in the Young Pioneer children's organisation, in clubs of the women's organisation or in schools and factories. Some who gained their interest in the theatre in just such an amateur group keep their contact with their old group and help their former colleagues while studying.

Manfred Mueller comes from one of these groups, made up largely of railroad employees. The group is called "Column Left", a name inherited from a famous left-wing "agit-prop" group of actors and singers which toured Germany in the pre-Hitler years opposing war and fascism.

Manfred is glad now of his experience in this very good amateur group, nor does he regret that he worked at another trade before he came here to study; he had been a salesman.

Now, in his third and last year at the Dramatic School, he is making plans to start acting at a theatre in the town of Guestrow in the northern part of the Republic, the area he comes from. It was really a pleasure to speak with Manfred Mueller; he was self-confident without being cocksure — a young man who knew exactly what he wanted in life.

Only once did he get angry — when we mentioned some of the students who are less serious about acting as a career. "Many of them need really to be set right in their ideas! 'What do you want to accomplish here?' they should be asked. 'Did you choose drama because you think it is 'chic', because you want to become a 'star' with a fancy car and a home in the country? Or did you come because you feel the inner necessity to communicate to the public the ideas of the dramatic poets? Only then do you really belong here!'"

The next class I visited was in a darkened room with a tiny stage at one end; this was the course in "Dramatic Etudes". Etudes are small scenes, whose content is decided upon by the group of students taking part in them. Nothing is rehearsed in advance, only the general plot of the action in the scene is decided upon. After every etude, the students who have been the onlookers discuss the quality of acting and the dramatic composition displayed.

One little scene was rather interesting; two young men with rifles stand honour guard very grimly; two girls arrive and try to lure the two into a conversation and then try to get them to laugh. The scene, though not worldshaking, was done very engagingly and showed in an interesting manner how differently today's young people regard a soldier's uniform than their forebears did only twenty years ago, when a man without a uniform was not considered a man at all.

Frau Hella Rother, an actress at East Berlin's big "Volksbuehne" theatre who teaches the course, described how difficult it was to convince beginners how important these little etudes were. They all want to start studying scenes from plays. Only when they have gained more experience do they realise how many creative ideas are necessary for the etudes and how unrestricted the actors are in them.

The following day was something of a climax for the first-year students, for their annual examinations

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wartime period in which the world alliance against nazism and the German resistance are given great prominence. In school, children are brought up to know about the evils and crimes of the nazi period, and beside the youth hostel I visited, in an ancient mountain castle where there had been a concentration camp, there are a museum and memorial to the camp. The GDR has established itself as genuinely working to wipe out all vestiges of nazism, and ex-nazis have not been repromoted to key positions as has happened in the West. This, in a sense, is the greatest achievement of the GDR, for it has really put an end to nazism on its territory. I found that a German who was by no means sympathetic to the new regime could not suppress exclamations of horror at the present legality of neo-fascism of the Mosley and the Jordan variety in Britain under the pretext of Western "freedom".

So, a new Germany is rising. It is suffering the problems of a bisected country with a bisected capital. But while according to most of the British press the area "behind the wall" is a grey mass, I found it, in fact, "normal".

were due. Before they began I had a chance to talk to the director. Herr Rudi Penka, still quite young, is himself an actor and plays several leading roles at the "Volksbuehne" Theatre. Before becoming director, he had taught at the College of Dramatics in Leipzig.

He told me that students get a basic minimum of 120 to 150 marks a month; a large proportion get an additional amount if their grades and general work are good enough. That is not very much, just enough to pay for food, lodging and other most necessary expenses (tuition is free, of course). Herr Penka added that there are many possibilities for the budding actor to earn additional money by working in the evening.

"But," I asked, "how does that fit in with the notice I saw on the blackboard prohibiting students from taking on jobs outside the school?"

It turned out that I had broached a very serious problem. It seems that actors are rather a spoiled category in the GDR, and especially in Berlin. For an hour's work for television or at dubbing a film into German they are paid sums which are out of all proportion to their true artistic merits, to the amount of work done or to the earnings of a factory worker. Many people with little talent try to become actors so as to earn lots of money. And these sums also mislead many of the students to race from one short job to another, doing work which often has very little relation to real acting.

The college has decided that it cannot permit its students to go dashing around making money (and getting swollen-headed) at the expense of studies and health. "But," added Director Penka, "we have nothing against our students taking on small parts at the legitimate theatres and earning pocket money for themselves, while they are also getting to know the genuine theatre milieu."

In this way the school prevents the students from pursuing money at the cost of their training. This is done by forbidding them to run around to the TV and film studios, but it is clear that many will forget this compulsory attitude as soon as they graduate, unless the theoretical courses in ethics and aesthetics are able to educate them to a real understanding of this question.

When the students graduate after three years, a central commission made up of representatives of the Culture Ministry and the Central Actors' Exchange arranges for their first theatre jobs, according to talent and openings at the GDR's more than 80 legitimate theatres. A new method now being tried has already shown good results; groups of young actors from the college are sent together to the same theatres, especially those led by directors with lots of initiative and original ideas. Going in groups makes it less likely that the young actors will conform to time-honoured routines, and makes it easier for their new ideas to influence the atmosphere at the theatre.

At these theatres the young actors only receive 400 marks a month at first, a sum which they can earn very much more quickly with television or cinema in Berlin. Of course, some of the students, usually the most talented, will remain in Berlin, but only if they have regular contracts with Berlin's legitimate theatres.

After watching some first year students at their exams, I spoke to Bärbel Bolle, 20-year old student. She told me how she had spent the pre-college year of work now required of most students, partly in a newspaper office and partly (and more enjoyably, she said) as an unskilled worker in a factory. Bärbel is pleasant, intelligent and, in addition, very pretty. This is not true of all the aspiring actresses, for talent and not looks are considered when applications are made; but good looks certainly never hurt an actress.

Bärbel grew up in a little village and later in a small town in the still rather backwoodsy Mecklenburg area. "When I was asked what I wanted to learn, I didn't have the courage to say acting," she told me. "There are still prejudices against being an actress in many small towns." But then she made the decision; after getting her secondary school diploma, she came to Berlin to take the preliminary examination. Of the 1000 applicants, only 200 were approved for the final entrance examination, and only 36 of these were finally admitted. She almost lost courage in the face of these odds, but the entrance examiners liked her acting well enough to pick her.

The Dramatic School has elaborate plans for the future. The overall plan for re-building East Berlin foresees a large complex of buildings which will include the State Ballet School, the School of Acrobatics and the State Drama School. This will make administration of the schools easier, will permit better meals made in a big new kitchen and will bring modern halls for dramatic practice, a handsome student hostel and a theatre with 500 seats. But it is still uncertain when this project can be implemented — probably not before 1965. Meanwhile the school is getting on with its job of training new actors for the theatres of the GDR.

GDR 5th IN ATHLETICS

The German Democratic Republic was fifth most successful nation in the European Athletic Championships in Belgrade in September. The good GDR showing was not so apparent to the average spectator or newspaper reader because athletes from both German states participated as one team, as the result of a ruling of the European athletics organisation.

The GDR maintains that the two German states should send their own teams to international sports events, but cooperates with West Germany whenever the international organisation requires it. West Germany calls for a joint team because it does not recognise the existence of the GDR, but often makes difficulties in choosing and sending such a team, especially since August 1961 when West German sports leaders officially banned sports cooperation between the two states.

At Belgrade, GDR athletes won a total of 1 gold medal — Manfred Matuschewski's victory in the 800 metre race — 6 silver medals and 1 bronze medal. This meant that the GDR had moved up to a leading place in European athletics; only the Soviet Union, Britain, West Germany and Poland had done better.

Other medal-winners among the GDR athletes were Doris Mueller (women's discus), Fritz Jahnke (10,000 metres), Hans Reimann (20 kilometre walk), Renate Garrisch (women's shotput), Waltraud Kaufmann (women's 800 metres) and Karin Balzer (women's 80 metres hurdles) — all silver medals — and Lothar Milde (shotput) who won a bronze medal.

Banned Communists Active

The Communist Party, banned in West Germany in 1956, is very active in the factories and mines of the Ruhr, Herr Weyer, Minister of the Interior of North-Rhine-Westphalia province stated on September 18th.

At present the Communists publish 92 underground factory newspapers in the province, Herr Weyer stated. 19 of these newspapers, which appear weekly or monthly, were published for the first time this year.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

A reader has sent me an interesting cutting from the "South Wales Evening Post". The cutting goes like this:

"Major Arno Teullein, commanding officer of the 143 Panzer Battalion which started training at Castlemartin Camp on Thursday, explained at a Press conference yesterday that his unit had recently been presented with a new crest.

"It is, in fact, a replica of the coat of arms of the town of Neuruppin, which lies within the Russian sector of Germany. 'Whenever a new crest is presented to a new Panzer battalion' he explained, 'it is always the crest of some German town which lies behind the Iron Curtain.' . . .

"The Major fought against the Russians twice during the last war, the first occasion when he was attached to a Finnish unit. He also fought in Poland."

I find it fascinating and slightly disguscing that a nazi officer should call a press conference in Wales to brag that he fought "against the Russians", and that his Panzer unit bears the crest of a peaceful and pleasant town in the German Democratic Republic. This is just another little example of the way in which the powers that be in West Germany, and particularly in the Bundeswehr, make no attempt to conceal the fact that they do not recognise the frontiers established in Europe as the result of the Second World War. The German Democratic Republic is, for them, part of their territory which has "been stolen" and which they would like to take the first opportunity to "liberate".

* * *

I hope that some sociologist somewhere is working away on a thorough analysis of the hagiography and demonology of the modern thriller. Anyone who reads Anglo-American thrillers attentively will have noted that the heroes have remained, throughout the years, consistently clean-cut, mainly blonde and probably "Aryan", and in the British thrillers at least definitely upper-class; but there has been a significant shift in the villains.

How to Bombard Friends and Influence People

"This . . . led to the British naval bombardment of Kagoshima in August of the following year; and the bombardment brought about closer relations between Britain and Japan, culminating in the alliance treaty of 1903."

"The Times", London, September 15th

In my youth, these tended to be either sinister orientals, or mad but fiendish central Europeans, very frequently German professors. During the late thirties and the war years there was a definite shift to nazi villains; but these have now of course faded, and the favourite villain is a Russian, though best-selling thriller-writer Ian Fleming has managed to combine nearly all the elements in some of his outsize villains who tend to be sinister half-Negro half-Chinese mad professors working for the Russians.

But I have been interested and revolted to note a recent tendency to make at least the subsidiary hero of some of these thrillers a retired SS man. A case in point is provided by a very unpleasant "political thriller" called "The Berlin Couriers" by James McGovern, recently published in Britain as a pocket book.

One of the heroes of this story, which is a bit of Cold War hate if there ever was one, is a fine upstanding American secret agent named Duffy; and here is an extract from page 57 of the book:

"It was a good feeling, Duffy thought, to know that people like K. were on your side. As an early member of the Nazi Party, K. was rewarded during the war with a minor post in the Ostministerium, dealing with the occupation of the Ukraine. Hard work, cool nerves, and a talent for handling people had brought him a transfer to Special Office VI-C-Z of the Reich Security Main Office where he distinguished himself . . ."

For those who are not up in nazi terminology, I might point out that Special Office VI of the Reich Security Main Office was also the branch in which Eichmann worked.

This lurid volume, "The Berlin Couriers" is a work of fiction; but the hard truth is that fictional characters like "K" do in fact exist, and that a certain number of western statemen and military men do have "a good feeling" that such men are on their side. How do you feel about it?

* * *

As many readers will know, the German language tends towards long words; in a famous essay Mark Twain quoted some which he described as "panoramas, not words".

For aficionados of polysyllablism I have a fine prize this week, gleaned from the earnest columns of the Official Gazette of the West German Defence Ministry:

"The names of the following units have been changed . . . Reserveunteroffizieranwaerterlehrkompanien shall in future be known as Reserveunteroffizieranwaerterkompanien . . ."

If you have puzzled those out, you will have seen that the new name is actually four letters shorter than the old one; the first positive piece of news I have seen from the West German Defence Ministry for a long time. You want to know what these monstrosities mean? The first one means "reserve-non-commissioned-officer-candidate-training-companies", and the second one is the same without the word "training".

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